

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



January 7, 1998

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-03-98

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- ☒ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☐ Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: CHILD SUPPORT ASSURANCE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will soon be soliciting counties to participate in an innovative demonstration project aimed at providing Child Support Assurance (CSA) as an alternative to welfare, pursuant to AB 1542 (Chapter 270, Statutes of 1997), Section 181, Chapter 3.3. To provide counties with additional information about CSA prior to soliciting proposals, a symposium is being held at the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) on February 13 and 14, 1998, in San Francisco. The symposium will bring together experts to present information to counties on how CSA has worked in previous pilots in other states, and how it might work with different models. The purpose of this symposium is to provide technical program design assistance to those counties considering CSA. The symposium will cover the philosophy and history of CSA, administering CSA, structuring benefits, fathers' involvement, the process for proposal submission, evaluation and funding. The symposium staff would like to contact counties that plan to attend so that they can tailor the symposium to specific county issues and concerns. Therefore, counties are asked to contact the Department by January 23, 1998 to express interest in attending the CSA symposium.

Contacting the Department to express interest in CSA and attending the symposium do not commit any county to submit a CSA proposal. In addition, symposium attendance is encouraged but not required for CSA participation. The Department will send out an ACL after the symposium describing proposal requirements, and we anticipate that proposals will be due approximately six weeks after the symposium.

## DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The purpose of the demonstration project is to test child support assurance models as alternatives to welfare under which families with earnings and a child support order receive a guaranteed child support payment in lieu of a grant under the CalWORKs program. The state

seeks to demonstrate whether a guaranteed minimum level of financial support for the children of participating families can result in financial stability for these children, while at the same time encouraging custodial parents to be employed and noncustodial parents to financially support their children. The legislative intent of the AB 1542 CSA provisions is that CSA be consistent with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193), and that it maximize cost effectiveness while lifting children out of poverty.

Upon application by a county board of supervisors, CDSS may approve demonstration projects in up to three counties to test models of child support assurance. One of the projects must conform to a design contained in statute. This particular model is very much like the New York Child Support Assurance Program (NY CAP). The other two projects will either test different models of child support assurance or may test the same model if the two counties in which that model is tested involve counties with different demographics.

A county may determine the maximum number of participants in that county, but not more than five percent of the county CalWORKs caseload or 8,000 persons, whichever is greater. The Department will work with selected counties to develop research designs to ensure thorough evaluations of the child support assurance demonstration projects that will minimally include the impact on work participation rates of custodial parents, CalWORKs participation rates and costs, paternity and child support order establishment.

The Research Branch of CDSS will contract with an independent evaluator to conduct a formal evaluation to determine the success of this demonstration project. The evaluation process may require counties to randomly assign eligible CSA participants to a control group and an experimental group. Each demonstration site will be required to compile certain data elements such as child support payment histories and welfare grant histories to be used in the evaluation.

Counties interested in learning more about CSA and participating in the symposium should contact the Department to express interest by January 23, 1998 by mail, phone or fax.

Mail to:

Marcia Dahlin

California Department of Social Services

Demonstration Projects and Administrative Support Bureau

744 P Street, MS 14-43

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: Marcia Dahlin (916) 654-1043. Fax: (916) 654-1295 Attn: Demonstration Projects and Administrative Support Bureau

If you have any questions regarding this demonstration project, please contact Marcia Dahlin of the Demonstration Projects and Administrative Support Bureau at (916) 654-1043. Any question regarding the Child Support program should be directed to Richard Williams of the Child Support Program Assistance Bureau at (916) 654-1532.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce Wagstaff".

BRUCE WAGSTAFF  
Deputy Director  
Welfare to Work Division

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leslie Frye".

LESLIE FRYE, Chief  
Office of Child Support